

American Sentinel, vol. 10

ESR

Ellet Joseph Waggoner

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
1895	3
December 12, 1895	3
"Enforcing the Law of God" American Sentinel 10, 40.	3

1895

December 12, 1895

“Enforcing the Law of God” American Sentinel 10, 40.

E. J. Waggoner

“For we know that the law is spiritual.” *Romans 7:14*. Then there can be no fulfilling of the law save in the Spirit. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.” Sometimes people talk about keeping the spirit of the law without the letter, but there is nothing in the Bible about keeping the spirit without the letter. By that expression men mean that they will keep what they think the law means, regardless of what it says. But God knows that the thoughts of man are vain. We are to forsake our own thoughts, as well as our own way. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” *Isaiah 55:8, 9*. God is Spirit; therefore they that worship Him must do so in the Spirit which He supply. He provides the means, and does not ask us to worship Him in our spirit, or in our conception of His law.*AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.1*

We are not to worship God as we think Him to be, but as He is. And no one, as stated in the text just quoted, can comprehend God, or define the bounds and limits of His will. Then no man can lay down a rule for another, or even for himself. Here is the unlimited word. No man can put a limit on the word of God, or say of any text that he has fathomed its depth, and that he has all the truth there is in it. No; the word is spiritual, and no man can fathom the depth of the mind of the Holy Spirit. For this reason no man, and nobody of men, is at liberty to put any construction on the word of God, or to change it, or to hold or teach that it means anything different from exactly what it says.*AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.2*

The knowledge of this shuts out everything like religious coercion, persecution, or the laying down of rules for people to follow; for true

worship must be rendered in the Spirit which God alone gives. The word must be taken, not in our own spirit, but in the Spirit of God, and that must lead us into larger and larger ideas, and worked in us that which we do not know ourselves. Men have secret faults of which they are utterly unconscious. Not only so, but no man knows the depth of any sin which is brought to his attention, or the fullness of any command which is joined upon him.*AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.3*

It is plain, therefore, that no man can measure his own righteousness, nor his own sin. He can simply know that he is a sinner, and that the righteousness of God is given to him. The more of the Lord he knows, the greater sinner he will realize himself to be. Therefore no man or body of men, whether in Church or State, can lay down rules by which a man must live; because the field of God's requirements is as unbounded as His own life, and must therefore ever keep increasing to our vision; and though men filled the world with books in the attempt to define everything, there still would be something omitted.*AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.4*

The Spirit of God must work its own life in every man. This takes the matter out of the realm of civil government entirely. No human authority whatever can impose the Spirit upon any man, or define the mind of the Spirit. The law of God, which is His righteousness, is the one thing which men are to seek. Christ said, "I know that His commandment is life everlasting." *John 12:50*. We also are to know the same thing. The law itself is spiritual; it is life everlasting. But life is not a figment, a fancy; it is real, and wherever there is life there must be something living. When we read the commandment is life everlasting, it does not mean that the written characters are life. They simply declare the fact. Everlasting life is in Jesus Christ. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." *John 5:26*. He is the fountain of life. *Psalms 36:9; Jeremiah 2:13*.*AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.5*

The commandment or law of God is everlasting life because it is his own life. Then is the life of the Spirit of God; and putting the Spirit of God into the hearts of men puts the life of God there. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, it gives freedom and peace with God. "The Spirit is life, because of righteousness;" and "if any man have not

the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” *Romans 8:1, 2, 9, 10*. Nothing less than the life of Christ is the law of God; and anything contrary to the life of Christ is condemned. Then we can leave the *right* of any body of men to enforce the law of God entirely outside of the question. It is merely a question of *power*. Has it the power to enforce the law of God? Has any government on earth power to take the life of God and put it into the hearts of its subjects? Certainly not. *AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.6*

Then when men do make religious laws, and in force religion upon people, it is certain that they are not enforcing the religion of Christ. Therefore when they do that, those who are loyal to Christ can have no complicity with it whatever. It is paganism, no matter what form of truth there may be. It is but the former without the power or life. If such enforcement is put in the very terms of the Bible, it is only the more thoroughly pagan; for it is paganism trying to palm itself off as Christianity. *AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.7*

The attempt to enforce the ten commandments, even just as they read, would be the greatest dishonor men could offer to the Lord. It would be saying that the law of God is no better than any man may be of himself. It is the same as saying that a man is all right if he keeps the law so that no man can find fault with him. But the man he merely refrains from the outward violations of the law may be worse than the man who utterly disregards it, and knows he is guilty. In the latter case the man has nothing more in to trust, while in the other, the man is building himself up in his own righteousness, and things that he is all right as long as he keeps a letter so far as men can discern. *AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.8*

But the law is spiritual, and only the power of the Spirit can work righteousness in an individual. The recognition of civil government as having anything to do with the law of God, is directly opposed to the idea of justification by faith. To lay down a rule or law requiring obedience to the law of God, with a penalty for disobedience, is to say to a man, “You could keep it if you would try; but you will not try, and so we will compel you to do it.” This is putting man on an equality with God. Anything less than the life of God is sin, and therefore for any power to attempt to enforce any of the precepts of Christ is simply an attempt to compel people to sin, and to hold

them in sin.*AMS December 12, 1895, page 389.9*

